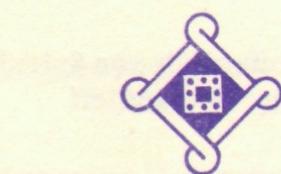
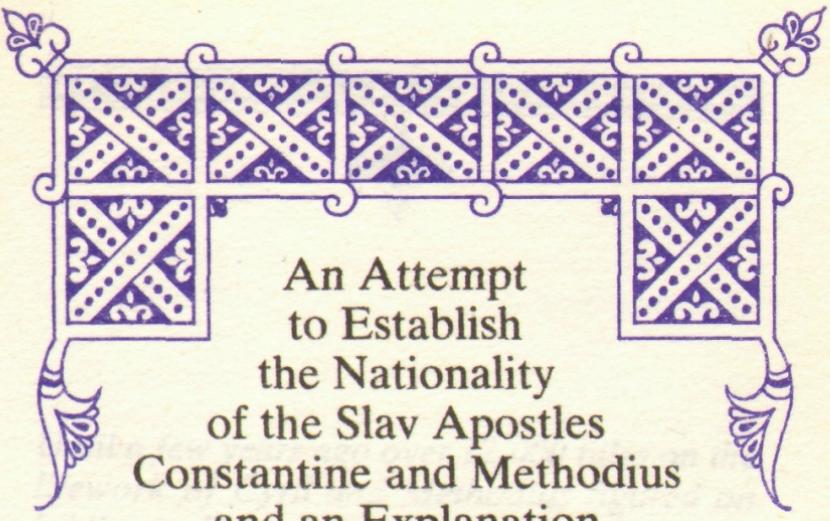


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София, 1989



An Attempt
to Establish
the Nationality
of the Slav Apostles
Constantine and Methodius
and an Explanation
of Some
Circumstances
Related to
This Question



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Resisted to
Circumstances
of some
and in Exclusion
Constitutive and Methodic
of the Siva Abstain-
the Nostalgia
to Easiness
An Attempt





Until a few years ago over 12,000 titles on the lifework of Cyril and Methodius figured on bibliographies as scientific and popular scientific literature and fiction. In 1980 Angelika Hoffer and Michael Margaritoff published a study in German, afterwards translated in Bulgarian (in the magazines 'Douhovna Kultura' and 'Plamuk') on the passage in the longer life of Constantine Cyril the Philosopher in which Constantine declared at the feast with the Khazar khan in the town of Sarkel that the ultimate goal of his life was to search for and attain his grandfather's honour. The preceptor answered thus the question as to what his rank was so that he would be seated as his rank became.

The two authors treat this passage in the life as a documentary trace not used till now to establish the nationality of the Slav-Bulgarian preceptor and enlightener. They make such a comprehensive and fruitful analysis that de-



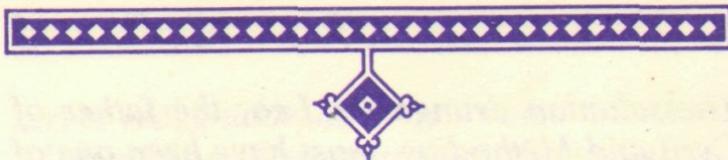
serves recognition as a 'new voice' in the sea of scientific and popular scientific writings on Cyril and Methodius. This is so because usually scholars dealing with the question of Cyril and Methodius since the 19th century, especially theologically-Christian oriented scholars, believed and wrote that this episode in the *vita* of Constantine the Philosopher echoed the biblical motif of the original sin of Adam who was expelled from Paradise and of his descendants' pursuit to regain the bliss of Paradise lost. As a matter of fact the latest Bulgarian publication of the *vita* in Volume III of the Complete Works of Clement of Ohrid (Sofia, 1973) gives the same interpretation of the text.

The interpretation of Hoffer and Margaritoff takes its own way and is built upon the historical situation in Byzantium and Bulgaria in the latter half of the 8th and first half of the 9th century when a battle was waged almost nonstop to consolidate the Bulgarian state. Victory and defeat alternated for the two belligerent sides in that battle. Under such circumstances Bulgarian Slavs and Byzantines often left their native places to settle in the neighbour country and some of them even to get highly placed positions in the state. The

Thessalonian drungarios Leo, the father of Cyril and Methodius, must have been one of those. His sons, however, though born in a Byzantine cultural and social milieu and influenced by it, remembered their ethnic origin and invented the new Slavonic script on such motives. The longer life of Constantine the Philosopher contains a hint of the ultimate goal of his life. Circa 850, when Constantine graduated from the Magnaura School the logothete Theoctistus proposed to marry him to his rich goddaughter whose name he did not mention and thus make him a relative. But Constantine refused because he did not want to become a strategus through this marriage; he believed he could become rich by knowledge in the search for 'my grandfather's honour and wealth', i.e. in the work to enlighten the Slavs in their native language.

Angelika Hoffer and Michael Margaritoff make a contribution to modern Cyrillo-Methodian studies parallel in and independent of the treatment of the passage in the longer life of Constantine Cyril the Philosopher in some studies of Bulgarian literary and historical science published since 1969.

Konstantin Mechev



Foreword

Byzantinology is a relatively new and fascinating science. As authors of this study goaded by our interest in it, we have been impressed by the personalities of the Slav apostles, Constantine-Cyril and Methodius. In the course of our studies we have noticed that little is known about them and what is known is often controversial and occasionally misrepresented. For instance, the nationality of Constantine and Methodius is often unclear; more often than not it is said to be Greek though this is not conclusively substantiated. One contradiction is the fact that the highly placed Byzantine official Constantine who was admired and highly esteemed by the Emperor and the Patriarch, created largely anti-Byzantine work, the Old Bulgarian alphabet. Another fact is that he, born in Thessalonica, wrote his works in a Slav tongue

and not in the local one; that he timely created the alphabet and the liturgical translations for the Bulgarians' Christianisation which followed more or less incidentally, in the opinion of some contemporary scholars; and that his work laid the beginning of the Slav churches' separation from Byzantium and the resulting decrease of Byzantine influences in the North. In this study an attempt is made to elucidate exactly those events.

The Question of the Slav Apostles' Nationality. Known Facts and Their Order

The nationality of Constantine (826–869) who, 50 days before his death in Rome, took the monastic vows and the name Cyril, and of his elder brother Methodius (815–885), is often said to be 'unclear' or at least 'Greek'. (Here the notion nationality should be considered as affiliation or association with an ethnic and language group or with a people or tribe that has taken shape.)

In connection with this, the knowledge of facts outlined in the following nine items

need comprehensive analysis and careful assessment:

1. Direct reference (to sources) as regards Constantine's nationality.
2. External signs of his origin: birth, family background, education and state affiliation.
3. The brothers' original, 'wordly' names.
4. Some works by the two brothers.
5. Vitae of the Slav apostles by other authors.
6. Constantine's Old Bulgarian idiom.
7. The spirit and language of Constantine's works compared to those of his contemporaries or of authors who had been working about that time and whose nationality is definite.
8. Constantine's inner duty and conclusions drawn from his lifework.
9. Translation of his mission in Bulgaria.

This study focuses attention on Constantine because, in connection with the historical events treated here, he was the more important person, though he lived less than his elder brother Methodius.^{1 *}

* See Notes.

To 1: Direct reference (to sources)

A source extant in one single copy, ascribed to the 12th century, explicitly mentions Constantine-Cyril's Bulgarian nationality. It is the so-called 'Short Life of Cyril', known also under the title 'The Dormition of Cyril'. The writer St. Clement of Ohrid, was the Slav apostles' disciple and longtime associate. The Life tells: 'The famous and big city of Thessalonica is the birthplace of our venerable father Cyril. He was born there. He is Bulgarian by origin and birth.'

St. Clement of Ohrid was the writer of a second, longer life of Constantine, on which we will also dwell.

To 2:
Constantine and Methodius were
born in Thessalonica.

Their father was a high-ranking Byzantine official.² The brothers were citizens of the Byzantine Empire³ and had a good command of Greek and Bulgarian language. Besides, it should be remembered that the people around Thessalonica and a considera-

ble portion of the city's population were Slavs in those days. In any case, that Thessalonica was their birthplace does not lead to a direct conclusion that the two brothers were Greeks.

Therefore, a conclusion that could be drawn is that the external indications of origin are not enough to make a substantiated deduction about Constantine's and Methodius' nationality.

Taking into consideration the partly established signs of origin could, and must – under an arbitrary and selective assessment of some proven signs – lead to uncertain, though not wrong conclusions.

Such were many of the statements made about Constantine so far. Generally, wholly, uncritically and unsubstantiatedly he is considered a Greek on the basis of some signs of origin. It is not an isolated case when Byzantines whose ethnic identity has not been conclusively proven are said to be Greeks.

To 3: The names of Constantine and Methodius

Methodius' Greek name is a flimsy proof of

his nationality as is the Latin name Constantine which had been accepted in Byzantine Greek. In those days the christianised got Christian names, i.e. names of Judaean, Syrian, Greek or Latin origin.

Latest studies' results invite a conclusion that the two Slav apostles' names were Tsurho and Strahota, not Constantine and Methodius.

The name Tsurho is difficult to pronounce in Greek. Constantine might have given it up even before he joined Byzantine high society. Forenames like Zarko and Tserko are still current in Bulgaria.⁴

The name Strahota, translated freely as 'awe inspiring' was not very suitable for an ecclesiastic. This name, which is discordant with church practices is no longer to be found in Bulgaria. It is highly probable that Methodius gave it up when he entered the monastery or even before that. We have every reason to believe that probably Methodius was not the name given at birth.

It was customary for believers who took monastic vows or chose a higher ecclesiastical career to renounce their worldly (birth) names and take new names as a sign of renunciation of the previous way of life.⁵ So we

know only the name Methodius as the name of the elder brother, that is, the name he had as a monk and bishop. It is possible therefore that this was not his birth name.

This supposition is backed by other evidence which is interesting exclusively as being provided by the place of the brothers' Moravian mission or as pertaining to it:

— The Czech Hussites who considered Constantine's and Methodius' work one of their ideological and theological foundation stones marked March 9, according to the then Roman Catholic calendar the day of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, as the day of Sts. Tsurho and Strahota.

— A compilation of old Latin legends about Cyril and Methodius was printed in Bohemia in 1495, under the title 'The Lives of St. Tsurho and St. Strahota'.

— Havel Salanski (1567–1621) wrote the following in his sermon about John Huss: 'God sent the Czechs two apostles: Tsurho and Strahota.'

— Pavel Stranski (1583–1657) wrote thus about Methodius in Chapter Six of his work 'The Czech State': 'The bishop of Greek faith Strahota, i.e. Methudius or Methodius'; further on he wrote that the

country's older church government was 'in a Greek or, which is the same, Bulgarian line.'⁶

— Jan Amos Komenski (L. Comenius, 1592–1670) wrote thus in Chapter One of his book 'The Clashes of the Bohemian Church': 'Strahota, alias Methodius.'

— Pastor Matei Vazlav Steier's 'Czech Canticle', a collection of church hymns of 1683, contains a hymn about the two saints Tsurho and Strahota.

— The same hymn was printed in 1727 in Antonin Konias' 'Citara noveho sakona'. There Tsurho and Strahota are designated as patron saints of Bohemia and Moravia.

— Bozhidar Dimitrov has discovered in the Vatican Library a 16th century chronicle in Italian about the Slav apostles' Moravian mission. There Methodius figures as Strahota.

The evidence here is quoted from Ivan Pavlov's article in the newspaper 'O Pis'menakh', Sofia, No 2 of December 2, 1979.

To 4:

Constantine's and Methodius' known works contain no direct indications of the two brothers' nationality.

To 5: Constantine's Longer Life

As already said, Clement of Ohrid, a disciple and longtime associate of the Slav apostles, composed a longer life of Constantine discovered by Gorski and another life of Methodius.⁷ Vita Methodii contains no indications of any relevance to the subject of this article. Vita Constantini contains the following passage:

During his visit to the Khazars, Constantine was asked a question before the Khan's feast.

'What is your rank so that we seat you as becomes your rank?'

Constantine answered: 'I had a very great and rich grandfather who stood near the Emperor. But when he, on his own will, refused the great honour entrusted on him, he was expelled and moved to strange lands where he was impoverished and begot me. I searched for my grandfather's former honour but could not attain it because I am the grandson of Adam.'

'You speak neatly and righteously, guest,' they replied and started paying honours to him.



The excerpt, though short, deserves a profound and critical examination.

First, the Emperor's ambassador told them of his grandfather's, not his own high rank which tallied with his embassy.⁸

How is this excerpt of the Vita to be generally assessed?

In any case, it is not a conventional hagiographic pattern which depicts the man who is honoured and said to come from the possibly highest ranking family, for the writer 'would have discharged his duty' in the beginning of the Vita. He describes Constantine's father as a 'noble and rich man'. This passage could not be a free and friendly invention for Constantine's above quoted answer provides very concrete information, and sounds proudly unchristian for a saint's life written by the clergyman, Clement of Ohrid.

If the narrative contains a historical kernel, it is unlikely that the family had been expelled from Constantinople because in the mind of the Byzantine Empire's conscientious citizens Thessalonica was their second largest city, not a 'strange' city. Besides, Constantine spoke of a strange land, not a strange city.

Therefore, the passage of the Vita proves

that Constantine and Methodius were the second generation descendants of a highly placed non-Byzantine family of foreign exiles who had been in the court of an unknown emperor.

It is often assumed that Constantine's 'my grandfather' is his allegory for the forefather Adam. This paper disagrees with the above assumption on the following grounds:

— The reason to include this passage in the *Vita* must have been serious. Its purpose could not have been to unnecessarily emphasize that Constantine descends from Adam.

— In his dialogues with educated Christians and theologians Constantine actually used various biblical allegories that were familiar and conventional for his interlocutors. However, it could not be an answer to a heathen. It would have been meaningless, inappropriate, impolite, and, what is more, unintelligible to a heathen interlocutor.

Constantine's answer consists of three sentences. The first sentence is: 'I had a very great and glorious grandfather.' The description of Constantine's grandfather and that of Adam should have been identical or very similar if both were about one and the same

person. However, the descriptions do not tally; on the contrary, the two characters are diametrically opposed: the one is 'very great and glorious', the other, the forefather and first sinner, is, according to the biblical story, poor, helpless, disobedient, flippant and yielding to temptation.

The second sentence of Constantine's answer is: 'When he, on his own will, refused the great honour entrusted on him, he was expelled and moved to strange lands where he was impoverished and begot me.'

It was not honour that Adam was offered; it was mercy which he accepted.

Besides, he did not refuse the honour on his own will; on the contrary, he was expelled from Paradise for disobeying God's command.

Adam has never been so rich as to be impoverished.

The third sentence is: 'I searched for my grandfather's former honour but could not attain it because I am the grandson of Adam.'

Here 'Adam' is semantically opposed to the word 'grandfather'. Therefore, those two notions cannot stand for one and the same person.

If Constantine's 'my grandfather' stood for Adam, those two notions should be interchangeable. If this sentence is reduced to tautology, it will be: 'I searched for my grandfather's honour but could not attain it because I am the grandson of my grandfather. This train of thought is devoid of sense and logic and a man in his senses would not have used it. He who caused death and sin (Rom v:15) and opposed God was deprived of honour which a Christian was expected to search for.

It is easy to guess what Constantine meant by 'Adam'. He used the name's convenient symbolism to show that he cannot attain his grandfather's honour because he was weak and sinful; it was a sign of modesty and a confession of his own imperfection, often expressed by Orthodox ecclesiastics and saints (e.g. St. John of Rila begins his Testament thus: 'I, the sinful John, who never did a good deed...').

To 6: Constantine's Old Bulgarian idiom

Language invites the supposition that Constantine's family were not from Thes-

salonica. It is to be assumed that Constantine used the Old Bulgarian idiom of his birthplace, respectively around Thessalonica. However, this is not so. At the turn of our century the Slavicist V. Oblak believed that he had established it down to details but V. Jagic more penetratingly upheld a different opinion. He supposed that Constantine and Methodius' dialect was used in the area between Constantinople and Thessalonica.

Ivan Gulubov who partly refers to B. Tsonev's works points out that Constantine and Methodius did not write in the Old Bulgarian dialect spoken in and around Thessalonica; they wrote in an idiom spoken farther north of that city; traces of it can be found in some dialects in the Bulgarian Rhodopes. (Gulubov, p. 221)

To 7: Constantine and Chernorizets Khrabr

Chernorizets Khrabr, one of the seven 9th and 10th centuries familiar Bulgarian writers, is of particular interest for, in the opinion of different scholars, he does not differ from Constantine in spirit and linguistic peculiarities. Today it is known that Cher-

norizets Khrabr belonged to the Bulgarian Tsar Simeon's retinue. Chernorizets Khrabr put much knowledge and dialectical sense in his polemic treatise 'O Pismenakh' (On Letters) aimed against the three-tongue heresy, the Byzantine cultural policy, the Byzantine party in Bulgaria and against the Greeks who insisted that their alphabet was better than the Slavonic. The name 'Chernorizets Khrabr' means monk 'named Brave'. I. Hanus supposes it was Constantine's pseudonym; F. Snopek upholds the opinion that Clement of Ohrid, Constantine's assistant, wrote 'O Pismenakh'; M. Weingard suggests Nahum, another of Constantine's associates; V. Zlatarski – Tsar Simeon and E. Georgiev – Simeon's uncle, Chernorizets Dox and advances the opinion that this writer shares Constantine's and Methodius' socially and locally determined linguistic peculiarities (the native idiom). However, his opinion is unfounded and not discussed completely. I. Hanus is of the same opinion and believes that Chernorizets Khrabr is Constantine's pseudonym.

Hanus, Snopek and Weingard who worked before World War I believed that Chernorizets Khrabry was a member of the

Moravian mission. Zlatarski, Snegarov, Georgiev and Kouev who carried on their studies in post-World War I and II years think the opposite, viz. that he was of Tsar Simeon's circle.

The suppositions of Hanus, Weingard, Snopek, Zlatarski and Georgiev, though none has been corroborated so far, show that the idiom and spirit of Constantine's work were very similar or identical with the spirit and work of Tsar Simeon, a staunch foe to the Greeks, and of his circle. Those views and Snegarov's opinion show that Constantine's idiom was that of the Bulgarian court.

To 8: Constantine's inner duty

Constantine's inner duty to a nation and a nationality could not have been demonstrated prior to 861. His impressively amazing faculties gained him free admission to the imperial court at 17, the office of Hagia Sophia's librarian and professorship of philosophy at 20 only; at 24 he was chosen to be an opponent in the dispute with the iconoclastic Patriarch Anis; in 855 and 861 he participated in the missions to the Arabs and



Khazars. His devotion to his religion and church, his sense of duty, skilful and excellent fulfilment of state and church commissions and a definite aloofness are likewise impressive.

Constantine's further activity could be traced in the following simplified order:

- Invention of the first Slavonic alphabet.
 - Translation of sacred texts into Old Bulgarian.
 - Preparation and leadership of the Moravian mission of 863–866.
 - Works in Moravia, Venice and Rome and the recognition of Slavonic as a liturgical language in 866–868.

This period of Constantine's life was under the sign of growing release from the inner bond with the Emperor and the Patriarch.

At the end of this process of release Constantine no longer felt any duty to the Emperor and the Patriarch and finally became indifferent to both. Though Pope Nicholas I excommunicated Photius at the Lateran Council in 863 and Photius, on his part, anathemised the Pope at the Oecumenical Council in Constantinople in 867, Constantine... accepted the Pope's invitation to visit Rome. He presented St. Clement's relics,

which he had found during the Khazar mission, to the Pope in Rome, not to the Patriarch in Constantinople.

Constantine became indifferent to Byzantium. He no longer mentioned it; he refused to uphold its interests; he gave up the splendid life in Constantinople; he stayed in Moravia where he was surrounded by the hostile Bavarian-Frankish clergy and never returned into the sphere of Byzantine influence. On the contrary, he was zealously committed to the Slav cause (as he understood it). His commitment was to Slavdom which he treated as a whole nationality, not only to the Moravians among whom he lived but whose language he never used in writing.

Constantine's Slavonic Alphabet – the Glagolitic

The invention and first drawing of the Slavonic alphabet is a historic achievement and most convincing proof of his inner duty.⁹

Moreover, he took into consideration only Old Bulgarian's phonetic features.

We think we should make an introductory note before delving in details into Constantine's achievement.

It seems that heretofore efforts to answer the cardinal question for whom – *cui bono* – the Bulgarian alphabet was invented and for whom the Greek texts were translated into Bulgarian have been somewhat biased, pre-conceived and rigid. This is clearly expressed in the multiple restriction of phrases with 'if' and 'however'. A fully unbiased and impartial study could rest on the assumption only – and then, naturally, be subjected to a critical test – that the creation of a literary language had been intended for a people whose language and language characteristics were embedded in its foundation, therefore, for the Bulgarians.

The more frequent concept, that Constantine invented his alphabet to facilitate his Moravian mission, does not pass the critical test of substantial grounds and time.

Constantine invented the Bulgarian-Slav alphabet on his own decision¹⁰, not commissioned or obliged by secular or church authorities.

The new alphabet was not necessary for the fulfilment of his mission; moreover, the

introduction and distribution of this alphabet set additional and absolutely needless difficulties. The Moravians were already using Latin characters. There was no reason for Constantine to create a new script for them. On the contrary, it would have been strange to create a new alphabet that no one demanded in a language that no one spoke in a country he did not know and for a people that did not need it for it already had a time-honoured script.

Constantine's further behaviour showed that he did not need adapt his alphabet to the Moravian language. He would have done it had his alphabet been intended for the Moravians; he could have done it in advance because Rostislav's ambassadors would have enlightened him while still in Constantinople. And last, he should have done it in Moravia for he made translations there. But he did nothing of the kind. His alphabet was not changed; it had been intended exclusively for Old Bulgarian.

Which Alphabet Should Constantine Have Chosen?

If we assume that Constantine aspired or had to fulfil his Moravian mission in the interest of his state, Emperor and Patriarch and to oust, for one reason or another, the Latin script from the territory of his mission, he should have acted in a different way. He should have introduced the artful Greek script familiar to him. In the first place, the Greek script was as inappropriate for this purpose as Latin, but both could have been slightly revised and adapted. This and only this could have been the pursuit of the mission. Moreover, the Emperor sought to expand his sphere of influence in opposition to the Frankish Kingdom and the Patriarch to spread his jurisdiction on a territory claimed by the missionary Frankish bishops.

For Whom Could Constantine Create His Alphabet?

Constantine's alphabet (if it had meaning and purpose) could have been intended for a

vernacular that lacked a script and that he spoke fluently and for a country which, Constantine thought, regardless of the reasons, should be a sole exception in Europe and use neither of the two time-honoured alphabets (the Latin or Greek).

The philosopher, diplomat and church politician Constantine must have thought about the meaning and consequences of his intention and known that the script and literary language that he created constituted a major political act.

Constantine was born and grew up in a city and area where Old Bulgarian was a spoken language alongside with Greek. He had command of both languages but later wrote in Bulgarian only. Constantine's alphabet followed Old Bulgarian phonetic features and he did not have knowledge of other Slav languages and peoples and did not take them into consideration.

It is difficult to imagine why he should not have invented the Glagolitic for the Bulgarians in order to create a literary language for them. There is no other even slightly convincing alternative to this supposition.

Bulgarian was spoken in the northern and western Byzantine provinces on the Balkans.

It would have been impossible to introduce a new alphabet in Byzantium: neither the Emperor nor the Patriarch nor the local Greek clergy would have allowed a new script that had to consolidate the Bulgarians. No less did Constantine develop and shape Bulgarian as a liturgical literary language...

Dating the Alphabet

We have the following two points to lean on in the attempt to date the invention of the Slavonic alphabet:

- a) The translations that Constantine took to Moravia in 863 were transcribed in a new alphabet. Therefore, it must have been created in advance.
- b) It is only Chernorizets Khrabrv almost a contemporary of the Slav apostles, who fixed a date: 6363 after 'the creation of the world'; moreover, he could not have known more about the time when it was made public. He himself was not certain of the year that he pointed and wrote thus: 'There are also other answers.'

To understand Constantine's attitude and

intention, it is not important when the alphabet was recorded but when and why he decided to invent it.

When we transpose Chernorizets Khrabr's date 6363 of the origin of the Glagolitic into our chronology we should remember that at that period there were two different chronologies 'after the creation of the world':

a) The Byzantine chronology

With the Byzantine chronology we deduct 5508 to obtain the year in our chronology. This system was used in Byzantium and on the Balkan Peninsula. We have come across 12 old datings in Bulgarian and Byzantine writings about Bulgarian history. They are taken out of the collections 'Macedonia', pp. 40, 41, 44, 48, 55, 62, 65 and 66 from P. Dinekov's 'Old Bulgarian Pages', pp. 54, 159, 168 and 195. All those datings follow the Byzantine chronology only. Hence the conclusion that Byzantine chronology was generally accepted in that period.

If Constantine's alphabet is ascribed to Chernorizets Khrabr's date 6363 we get 855. The Moravian mission had not even been planned at the time.

b) The Alexandrian chronology

With the Alexandrian chronology we deduct 5500 to obtain the year in our chronology. The Alexandrian chronology was not current in Bulgaria in the period in question. Moreover, there is nothing to prove that it was at least known there. Nevertheless, most of the scholars dealing with Constantine's work believe that Chernorizets Khrabr fixed his date according to this pattern. We are not familiar with well-grounded proofs.

If despite the lack of convincing proof Chernorizets Khrabr's dating is transposed into the Alexandrian pattern, we get the year 863. It was the year when Rostislav asked to be sent a mission and Constantine set out with the ready translations from the Gospel transcribed in the new alphabet.

The following question arises: is it possible to accomplish within less than a year a decision to invent an alphabet, invent it, coin Christian terminology in a pagan language, transcribe excerpts from the Bible and other holy books¹¹, transcribe the translations in the new characters, prepare a mission and set out on a long journey?

The answer to such a question is in the negative. Though any comparison is unsatisfactory, let us remember that it took the

Egyptians at least one thousand years to form their writing sings; the Assyrians and Babylonians needed centuries; and it took the Greeks centuries to revise and complement the Phoenician alphabet from which theirs evolved.

Human knowledge and experience suggest a span of years between the day when Constantine started to think whether he should invent a Bulgarian alphabet and the day on which the translations in Bulgarian were publicised. Besides, it is worth considering that we have every reason to think that Constantine waited for a suitable occasion to publicise his work and did not do so as soon as he finished it.

This span includes the difficult process of making a decision to bear such a burden. The invention of an alphabet is a difficult and long effort requiring an optimal graphic variant for each letter and preliminary precise studies (phonetically Constantine's alphabet is one of the most precise of all great alphabets). It is to be assumed that originally the new alphabet was not complete and had to be revised many times.

The same holds true of the translation of parts of the Bible and other sacred texts into

Bulgarian. No doubt, such translations are most difficult and take much time. Constantine transcribed them in the new alphabet, that is, he must have had a very long exercise to acquire the necessary skill to transcribe books using a new script. He had to coin a new Christian terminology and a new Christian phraseology for the pagan Bulgarian language.

We must assume that the early manuscripts were not final redactions, that is, Constantine had to check his early manuscripts for style and spelling in general, correct them and copy them one or several times before the final version of the texts.

Our idea of the practical course of that literary endeavour should lead us to the conclusion that, according to assessment and experience, Constantine must have made up his mind (which is what matters here most) to invent the Glagolitic alphabet long before he thought of an action like the Moravian mission, regardless of the chronological pattern underlying the dating.



Reasons for the Creation of the Alphabet

The reason for the creation of the alphabet by Constantine should be sought in the domain of the subjective and emotional and in a definite political intention according to which, Constantine thought, the Bulgarians had to have their own Slavonic script that he was to elaborate. This is not easy to establish. All present-day Christian nations were converted to Christianity without a concurrent need of an alphabet of their own. All European nations, except the Greeks and the Romans, successfully developed their cultures using an alphabet that was not theirs but never tried to invent their own, nor did they feel they needed one. Moreover, a high ranking official in Constantinople could not set himself the task to work in favour of the dangerous political enemy from the north and help it thus liberate itself of Byzantium's political, religious and cultural influence. No other reason can be found why the high-ranking Byzantine official Constantine should be engaged in anti-Byzantine work, a Bulgarian alphabet, but that he felt Bulgarian and duty-bound to Bulgaria.

Subjective and Emotional Reasons

It is very difficult to guess the subjective and emotional reasons for the invention of the Slav-Bulgarian alphabet. We are inclined to accept that the fact that Constantine felt Bulgarian though he was a Byzantine servant can alone explain it. This supposition is more influenced by the present-day attitude to nationalities and considers less the distant past when cultural association and religion were the dividing line.

Political Reasons

This major work had tremendous political consequences that Constantine must have envisaged.

We could hardly understand the political reasons behind the invention of the Glagolitic without this supposition. Byzantium could eliminate the constant threat from the north by the subjugation of the overall hostile, restless Bulgarians in one of the two following ways: military, by total conquest and ultimate victory through the occupation of the country, or through cultural influence of

their higher culture and civilisation with a final goal – an incorporation into the Byzantine Commonwealth. Total military conquest proved impossible, while cultural influence grew increasingly and incorporation into Byzantium seemed attainable. Bulgaria was politically and militarily independent but religiously and culturally depended on Byzantium. Greek became the official and court language in Bulgaria. Constantine's alphabet put a spoke in the wheel of that influence. It is unlikely that the alphabet was created so as to bring Bulgaria to Christianity. This would have been a unique case in history because none of the nations needed an alphabet of its own as a precondition to be christianised; the Bulgarians likewise adopted Christianity later without having their own alphabet. Constantine could not expect that his letters should be a precondition. What he could expect was that the introduction of the Glagolitic alphabet would resolutely oust Byzantine influence from the territory where it was spread.

Therefore, Constantine's reasons to create the Slav-Bulgarian alphabet must have been to oust Byzantine influence from Bulgaria.

Consequences of the New Alphabet

From Byzantine point of view that alphabet was a 'treason' to Byzantium. Its use had the following effects:

a) General

Greek did not become the Orthodoxy's lingua franca the way Latin became with the Catholics. A small number of Byzantine ecclesiastics could, within a limited framework at that, work in other Orthodox countries and disseminate the Byzantine influence. The Constantinople Patriarch's supreme power was questioned first and overthrown later. His position with respect to the enemy in Rome, the Pope, was seriously weakened. This prepared the split of the Orthodox churches. Even the Patriarch did not translate the Byzantine policy in the Orthodox countries. Old Bulgarian, which later as Church Slavonic was for some time Europe's third international language, became the most widespread liturgical language in Orthodoxy. (D.S. Obolensky, p. 189)

b) In Bulgaria

Greek could be used in church service, liturgical and other books, official documents and inscriptions after Bulgaria's eventual Christianisation; with its own literary language Bulgaria could develop its culture. Byzantium's cultural role was reduced. Greek was banished as an official language from the royal court and top circles. Good knowledge of the Greek language was no longer a cultural pursuit; Bulgaria became independent and grew stronger not only politically and militarily but also culturally.

Why Wasn't the Glagolitic Alphabet Invented and Used Earlier?

The answer to this question is to be found in what has been said so far. It reveals why Constantine did not announce earlier his decision to invent a Bulgarian alphabet or offer the alphabet itself as soon as he finished it. This would have incurred the disapproval of the Emperor and the Patriarch who would have hindered him in his work.

But as soon as an opportunity arose, viz.

the Moravian mission, he offered his ready script.

Why in Moravia First?

Constantine used the alphabet first in his translations of biblical and liturgical books from Greek into Bulgarian in Byzantium and in his mission in Moravia later. He had at least three reasons not to use it in Bulgaria first, viz.:

- a) Without an invitation from Boris Constantine faced the alternative: either to use the script in Moravia immediately for an opportunity had suddenly risen, or wait for an opportunity to use it in Bulgaria in an uncertain future.
- b) Had Constantine and Methodius moved to Bulgaria, this would have been a heavy burden to Boris and his policy, not help. The opposition would have treated with hostility representatives of Byzantium and grandsons of a man expelled from Bulgaria. As it is well known, the opposition led by Boris' elder son revolted after the conversion to Christianity, so it would have taken Con-

stantine and Methodius' arrival and their work as an additional proof of the Prince's concession to Byzantine influences both in politics and religion.

c) Constantine and Methodius, the grandsons of an exile, could not go to the great grandson of his persecutor and depend on him.

The Moravian Mission – Reasons and Intentions

The Moravian mission was Constantine's second historical work. It was the interplay of the different interests of three factors that accomplished it:

1. Rostislav (840–869), then Prince of Great Moravia, asked the Byzantine Emperor Michael III to send him missionaries to teach his already Christianised people the Christian canon and direct them along the road of truth.

2. Emperor Michael III and Patriarch Photius responded to the request.

3. Constantine led the mission.

The afore-mentioned religious purpose of that mission which started in the autumn of

863 (Obolensky, p. 189) had the apparent features of seeming holiness. The three factors' interests were not identical. Each of them pursued his own goal.

Rostislav wanted to establish contacts with Byzantium and wanted help because he felt threatened by the alliance of his mighty neighbour Ludwig 'the German' with Boris of Bulgaria in the early 860s.

Emperor Michael III and Patriarch Photius sought an ally against their enemy, Bulgaria; besides, they wanted to win the Moravians, if possible, to the Orthodoxy headed by Byzantium, and through religion to make them culturally dependent on Byzantium. This intention is documented in the Emperor's letter of recommendation about Constantine to Rostislav. The letter reads:

'By the grace of God the Emperor sends him the most wise man who knows the Moravian language too. (The Catholic) Moravians should not delay but be converted and embark on the true road.'

The imperial chancellery was exaggerating. Constantine did not know Moravian but understood it to an extent.

Constantine's work and efforts were

steered in a course of his own. The high-ranking ecclesiastic and state official never disseminated the Orthodox faith nor did he defend Byzantine interests. Unlike Rostislav and Emperor Michael he spoke of Slavs only, not of Moravians.

His work, carried out in difficult conditions and serious hostility, was aimed against the 'three languages heresy' and at the production of independent Slav literature and culture based on it through the introduction of an alphabet. There were Slavs not only in Moravia but also in Byzantium's neighbours, in Bulgaria, and in Byzantine Thrace, Macedonia, Thessalonica and Peloponnesus.

To 9:

Translation of the Moravian Mission to Bulgaria

The return of the mission in 886 raises two questions: why did the associates and disciples of Cyril and Methodius go to Bulgaria,

not to Constantinople, as natural for a Byzantine mission? Did Constantine and Methodius choose that country as the destination of the move, i.e. did the disciples follow their teachers' behest?

The sender of the mission did not intend it for Bulgaria.

The motives to go to Bulgaria could not be just a desire to work among the Slavs; if this was the case, they could have stayed either in Moravia for, following Constantine's example they were committed to Rome, or in Serbia which the elder ones had to cross on foot. Besides, Bulgaria was not a purely Slav state.

The rest of the missionary group went to Bulgaria not at an invitation promising good living conditions or a new field for work ahead. Bound for Constantinople they chose to remain in Bulgaria, without acting on a spontaneous impulse, because the second group of the mission left for Bulgaria via Byzantium's capital. In *Vita S Clementis* Theophylactus writes thus: 'They longed for Bulgaria; they thought about Bulgaria and hoped that Bulgaria is ready to give them peace.'

Was the coming to Bulgaria in the spirit and meaning of Constantine and Methodius? The answer is yes.

The eventual failure of the Moravian mission had been foreseen from the very beginning, so it was natural to think about what had to be done afterwards. The decision could have been taken by Cyril and Methodius alone, not against their will. The coming to Bulgaria was an expression of their innermost conviction.

Constantine's Nationality

This paper adduces five different indications of Constantine's nationality that affirm and complement each other:

- a) direct indications in the Dormition of Cyril, Cyril's Short Life;
- b) Constantine's answer in the Khazar Khan's palace;
- c) his idiom;
- d) the style and tone of his works;
- e) his inner bond.

To item a:

Clement of Ohrid, Constantine's lifelong associate, wrote in the Short Vita that Con-

stantine was a Bulgarian (the Slavs in Bulgaria were already occasionally called Bulgarians, too). We have no reason to think that the Slav apostles' longtime associate had scanty information or that he did not tell the truth.

To item b:

According to Constantine's answer in the Khazar palace Constantine was not the issue of a Byzantine family; his grandfather had been of the retinue of a foreign king; his grandfather refused the honour entrusted on him and had to flee abroad; Constantine was born abroad. At that time there was no Greek state outside Byzantium and of all Slavs only the Bulgarians had a king.

To item c:

Constantine's idiom was not the Bulgarian-Slav idiom spoken in Thessalonica; it was spoken farther northeast, as established by remains in the region of the Bulgarian part of the Rhodopes. Constantine could have learned that idiom from his family, not from the population in his native city. Perhaps

with the passage of time his idiom became identical with that spoken in his native city. Yet, a sufficient number of linguistic features exists to prove the difference.

Constantine's Slav-Bulgarian idiom shows that the Slav apostle came from a family that had moved to Thessalonica and partly supports his answer at the Khan's palace. Perhaps indirectly it supports Clement of Ohrid's statement, viz., that Constantine's nationality was that of the Bulgarians living to the northeast of Thessalonica.

To item d:

The linguistic features of Constantine's works and their tone are similar, respectively identical with those of Chernorizets Khrabr. This similarity is so great as to make some scholars believe the two names stand for one person. Today it is generally accepted that Chernorizets Khrabr belonged to the Bulgarian royal court. Since language peculiarity is a sign of origin, rank and social stratum, Constantine's idiom is a further parallel corroboration of his answer to the Khazars, viz. that his family had had a court rank.

To item e:

Constantine's inner duty was most vividly manifest in his major work – the Bulgarian alphabet, by which he was pursuing goals that, at approximately the same time, the Bulgarian court was also after, viz. cultural independence from Byzantium by domestic and foreign policy means. This work which had no visible outer pretext was, from a Byzantine point of view, treason favouring Bulgaria.

The above said and the opinion advanced here are to the effect that the Byzantine citizen Constantine and his family were of Bulgarian extraction.

Possible Reasons for Constantine's Family's Flight

Following Khan Kormisosh (739–756), for fifty years, under the khans Vineh (756–762), Telets (762–764), Sabin (764–766), Umar, Oktou (766–767), Pagan, Boyan (767–779), Telerig (770–777), Kardam (777–803), till

Khan Kroum ascended the throne in 803, Bulgaria was rent by internecine struggle and unrest. The adherents to the occasionally defeated parties fled abroad, usually to Byzantium. One of the fugitives was a ruler, Khan Telerig who in 777 went to Constantinople and there embraced Christianity and accepted baptism.

Constantine's family might have been among the groups of fugitives fleeing for some internal political reasons.

There may be a second reason for Constantine's grandfather's expulsion: his issue were Christians and two of his grandsons were canonised. At least one of them, Constantine, as evident from his answer at the Khazar Khan's palace, sought his grandfather's honour. A clergyman would have hardly sought it if his grandfather had been a heathen. Therefore, he must have been a Christian.

Bulgaria was never without Christians. Prior to the coming of Asparouh's Bulgarians some of the Slav rural population south of the Danube incorporated into Bulgaria after crossing the river in 680 professed this faith which was the Byzantine Empire's state religion.

Prince Boris' ambassadors stated at the church council in Constantinople in 870 that when in 680 the Bulgarians crossed the Danube they found Byzantine clergy.

The first Bulgarian saint Boyan (Enravot-Nravota) was massacred for his Christian faith in 833, i.e. prior to Bulgaria's conversion to Christianity. The persecution of Christians was sometimes cruel. It is possible therefore, that Constantine's grandfather was a Christian already and his flight was due to religious reasons.

Attempt at Dating

Constantine was born in 826 and Methodius in 815. Their grandfather must have been a rich man when 'on his own will he refused the great honour entrusted on him' and was expelled. If we take a period of 30 to 35 years for the following generation of parents, it is to be inferred that the expulsion took place between 780 and 796 approximately. At that time Khan Kardam (777-803) ruled Bulgaria.

A Hypothesis for Constantine's Participation in the Bulgarians' Conversion

There is nothing to prove that the Bulgarian Prince Boris and Constantine ever met though both were after one and the same goal in a conspicuous way: the creation of an independent Slav-Bulgarian culture. There exist various facts inviting a highly probable supposition that the two contemporaries had been at least in indirect touch. Let us focus our attention on the following four facts:

1. The Bulgarians were converted in the following way (according to the view accepted today): in 864 or 865 Boris immediately surrendered to Emperor Michael against whom he had fought a battle, adopted Christianity and recognised the subsequently perished. An interpolation reads: 'The Bulgarians were chris-
the two different reasons:

- a) The Bulgarians, who were starving as a result of a crop failure, launched a campaign to seize Constantinople;
- b) Byzantium was alarmed by Boris' treaty

with Ludwig 'the German' and attacked the Bulgarians.

2. Circa 843 Constantine gained free admission to the Byzantine imperial court and started attending the Magnaura School.

3. A copy of Manasses' Chronicle (today in the Vatican) translated in Turnovo between 1311 and 1340 contains interpolations pertaining to Bulgarian history made probably in 1345 by an anonymous man of letters who apparently has had recourse to sources that subsequently perished. An interpolation reads: 'The Bulgarians were christianised under that king (Basileus Michael III, 842–867) and his mother. It was 511 years ago. Once, I do not know how, the sister of the Bulgarian prince was captured by the Greeks, taken to the royal court, converted and taught the letters. In the empire of those emperors, because there was great peace between Greeks and Bulgarians, she was exchanged for a boyar named Theodore Cypharas. Back home she continually taught her brother in the Christian faith till she converted him. When he became Christian the Bulgarians rebelled against him and wanted to kill him for his apostasy.'¹² (P. Dinekov, p. 367)

4. The conspicuous coincidence of the Bulgarians' conversion in 863, the completion of the Slavonic alphabet and of the translation of the liturgical texts into Bulgarian and their announcement in 863 is impressive but this fact has not been accorded due attention so far.

To 1.

We have ground enough to doubt all details in the conventional narratives of the Bulgarians' conversion.

An imperial document reads: 'Peace with the Prince of the Bulgarians Boris. Boris gets the region between the Iron Gate and Develtus which the Bulgarians call Zagora. Boris adopts Christianity.' (Dölger, S. 56, c. 863).¹³ None of the official imperial documents mention a battle, least a victory. The fact that different authors name two different attackers in a battle shows that our information could not be trusted.

Besides, it is a puzzle why hunger should make an army march across the fertile areas north of Constantinople to besiege the Byzantine royal city.

Moreover, it is a puzzle why Bizantium

should declare a war on the Bulgarians for practically an insignificant treaty. However, a little later (869) when Boris planned to seize a big valley – which was absolutely at variance with Byzantine interests – (the plan failed due to the stubbornness of the parties involved – Pope Hadrian and Boris), the Byzantine government had no other deterrent but weak persuasion.¹⁴

Boris never demonstrated a readiness to recognise Byzantine supremacy. The Byzantine Emperor Michael never acted in a way as if he claimed such supremacy. It is noteworthy that different Byzantine authors in the following century wrote about that alleged recognition but contemporaries did not (Obolensky, p. 117); therefore, these are authors who could not have first-hand information and whose style shows their partiality.

The accounts of the alleged battle that no one knows precisely when, where and why it should have been fought, are absurd. They tell that the Emperor's army won, but the vanquished enemy, the Bulgarians, gained Byzantine territory after the battle. Those accounts are so controversial, incomplete and partly illogical that it is justifiable to ask whether there exist trustworthy sources at all

to corroborate the battle. Besides, it is not very clear how a new convert was able to grasp the Christian religion, get inspiration for it and become a zealous Christian right away.¹⁵ That Boris might have adopted Christianity in advance and was familiarised with the Christian doctrine is not unlikely.

To 2.

Circa 843, when he was 17, Constantine was taken from Thessalonica to Constantinople where he attended the Magnaura School and had an access to the imperial court.¹⁶ What reasons did the Byzantine government, the Emperor respectively have? Constantine must have been exceptionally intelligent. However, intelligence alone had never been reason enough to have a free access to an imperial court, the less so for a provincial 17-year-old youth. The government in Constantinople must have had additional reasons to bring a clever youth from a Bulgarian boyar family to Constantinople. This case is reminiscent of the attitude to another intelligent Bulgarian young man, namely Prince Simeon, who later was likewise brought to Constantinople where he

attended the Magnaura School and had an access to the imperial court. (In both cases Byzantium was disappointed.)

The Byzantine government's intentions for Constantine are not backed by documents. We merely suppose that they were related to the conversion of the Bulgarians and to the invention of the Bulgarian alphabet which was not planned by the Byzantine government.

To 3.

The afore-said interpolation in Manasses' Chronicle means that Boris had accepted Christianity from his sister, not from the Byzantines in 863. So far little attention has been given to this interpolation because the writer is anonymous and the details it contains were not considered either completely or partly corroborated. It deserves a more serious consideration for it may be partly corroborated. A message by Emperor Michael III to Boris in 844 reads:

'Boris must release the monk Theodore Cupharas at any cost he sets.' (F. Dölger, S. 54, documents of 844).

The anonymous man of letters is right,

therefore, that Boris kept a Byzantine captive, Theodore Cupharas, whom the Emperor wanted to release at any cost.

To 4.

The coincidence of the Bulgarians' conversion to Christianity which, it continues to be believed today, was more or less accidental, and of the completion of Constantine's alphabet, a Bulgarian alphabet, and of his sacred translations, is more than obvious. It could not be accidental that Constantine worked for years on what could, according to the then viewpoint, be applied only in pagan Bulgaria after its conversion to Christianity.

The fact that after Boris' conversion and baptism and the painful process of Christianisation of the Bulgarian people which he started Constantine possessed the translations that were needed for that purpose shows a definite coordination between Constantine's translation work and the preparation for the Bulgarians' conversion regardless of when, where and by whom it was started. It could hardly be explained as 'accidental'. As previously stated, Constantine must have started work on the alphabet and

the translations originally intended for the Bulgarians long before 863. A man who shoulders such a heavy burden must have a motive and a conviction that his work is meaningful, that is, that it will materialise in the foreseeable future. At least the translations could be used only in a Bulgaria converted to Christianity. Only the Bulgarian ruler Boris could provide a pretext for the conversion. Who could have assured Constantine, or at least give him justifiable hope, that Boris would adopt the Christian religion and introduce it in his country soon?

Such a person had to answer the following five-point description:

- to have a good knowledge of what Boris thought and planned;
- to know that someone was making an effort that holds promise to acquaint the Prince with the Christian faith and convert him;
- to have a secret contact with Constantine because neither the pagan Bulgarian supreme power (first and foremost the later opposition led by the Prince's elder son Vladimir) had to be aware that someone was trying to convert Boris nor the Byzantine secular and church supreme authorities had to be aware that Constantine was evolving a Bul-

garian alphabet and translating books in Bulgarian. That person must have discussed with Constantine in advance his overall work and kept in touch with him to acquaint him with how the conversion progressed;

— his position and character must have inspired trust so that Constantine could count on his information and begin his translations;

— he must have shared Constantine's conviction that the Bulgarians had to have an alphabet of their own.

We do not know who that person was. Should anyone find this inference unsatisfactory, let him embark on the hazardous road of hypothesis. We will venture one. Constantine must have obtained exact information on the Bulgarian court's attitudes in one of the following ways:

a) through the Byzantine government. That government, however, could not be taken into consideration nor could it furnish Constantine with a pretext to create a Bulgarian alphabet and make translations into Bulgarian;

b) through his family in Thessalonica who might have maintained contact with relatives and some friends. Such information, however, is unlikely to be much trustworthy for

it should have been very difficult to get it, if at all, and in indirect ways only.

c) through Boris' sister in Constantinople. The existence of such a relative of the Bulgarian Prince in the Byzantine capital mentioned in a partly corroborated note cannot be taken as certain. Yet it cannot be discarded as impossible either. The Prince's sister is the sole person answering the above five-point description. This supposition allows a hypothesis which is a base for discussion though it has not been sufficiently substantiated yet.

It must be clear that Byzantium had an interest in the Bulgarians' Christianisation which would have enabled the Patriarch who, in that time, pursued an explicitly Byzantine state policy, to gain religious power over believers in Bulgaria. The Bulgarian ruler's sister was brought to the imperial court where she became a convinced Christian and, according to the note in Manasses' Chronicle, converted her brother later; she stayed in Constantinople at least till 844. Constantine, a devout Christian, and an intelligent young man from the province whom nobody knew, also with a Bulgarian boyar family background and very good knowledge

of the Bulgarian court language, moved to Constantinople in 843 where he had free access to the imperial court. Was it coincidence or a definite governmental plan? The supposition goes on that Boris' sister taken to the imperial court met Constantine in Constantinople, and that those two strangers in Constantinople, related by their origin, language and conviction made a connection, perhaps encouraged by the governmental circles there. Those two devout Christians had to feel sorry about Bulgaria's pagan condition or at least to think how to cope with it. The Prince's sister could provide most trustworthy and thorough information about the attitudes and tendencies in the Bulgarian court and court circles. Later, we don't know exactly when, Constantine, without any apparent reason, translated Christian liturgical books into the language of the pagan Bulgarians and the Bulgarian Prince's sister converted her brother to Christianity. Was all this accidental or a plan between the Prince's sister and Constantine? We are inclined to accept the latter.

If the above events followed the scenario of that hypothesis, it means that:

- a) the conversion of the Bulgarians was not

the consequence of a lost battle which is historically hard to prove on account of suspicious grounds, but the cause of the Bulgarian ruler's blood-bond relative, his sister;

b) the Prince's sister and Constantine must have acted on an agreed plan; she had to convert her brother, he had to translate books which could be used in Bulgaria only after the conversion. The simultaneity and coordination of the two acts show it. Naturally, we have no proofs;

c) the alphabet might have been created at the initiative or stimulus of Boris or his sister as a preventive measure against the opposition in their own country. The opposition which later revolted and was crushed in bloodshed tried to impede the conversion in which they discerned growing foreign influences. A Bulgarian alphabet and liturgical books in Bulgarian could very much weaken this argument.

This hypothesis has not been proved nor can it be proved. It could, however, make the picture complete and explain some inexplicable facts as, for instance, why:

a) a young man from Thessalonica had free access to the imperial court in Constantinople;

b) Constantine had no clear motive but created a Bulgarian alphabet and translated Christian books into the language of pagan Bulgarians;

c) the Bulgarians were converted and Constantine completed his works at approximately the same time;

d) Boris immediately received the harassed members of the unsuccessful Byzantine mission whom he did not know and who might have done harm to his relations with his ally, Ludwig 'the German' and installed them at the homes of his personal friends Cheslav and Eshach. His behaviour is easy to understand with respect to associates and disciples of Constantine whom he knew and esteemed;

e) Boris was familiar with the Christian teaching before his conversion in 863 and embraced Christianity whereon the question whether the conversion to Christianity was affirmed by baptism could be bypassed.

Constantine did not go to Boris. His disciples and associates brought his alphabet and works to Bulgaria. A possible explanation is that the relation between Boris and his sister in Constantinople was broken by peculiar circumstances: for example, the Prince's sis-

ter's death or some discords.

Conclusions

The major results of this study – as much as the facts adduced have been properly ordered and analysed and the conclusions drawn – are:

1. The nationality of the high-ranking Byzantine state and church official Constantine-Cyril was Bulgarian.
2. Constantine's family belonged to the Bulgarian court circles. His grandfather was of the ruler's retinue, perhaps Khan Kardam's. Having refused the honour entrusted on him, the grandfather had to leave his country for religious reasons and emigrate to Byzantium, most probably in the late 8th century.
3. Constantine's alphabet was invented in 855 and originally was intended for the Bulgarians only. The Glagolitic had to protect the Bulgarians in particular and all Slavs in general from the growing foreign influences and from assimilation. It was not accidental that Constantine's alphabet was widespread in Moravia first.

4. The Bulgarians were converted in 863, not in 864 or 865.

5. The order of some facts invites a supposition that Constantine together with Prince Boris' sister was involved in the incipient process of Christianisation, that his works – the Glagolitic and his first translations of liturgical books – were directly dependent on Prince Boris's conversion to Christianity in 863.

The Significance of Constantine and Methodius' Lifework

Constantine and Methodius shall always be venerated and celebrated as the creators of the Bulgarian, respectively Slavonic alphabet, as Slav christeners and founders of Slavonic literature. They did not convert anybody though. Seven years later in Bulgaria Constantine's alphabet, the Glagolitic, was superseded by a better variant, the Cyrillic, which continues to be used at present (in an improved form whereas his has been buried into oblivion and plays a linguistic and historical role only). Actually, Slavonic lite-

rature had a real beginning in Preslav and Ohrid owing to the work of Prince Boris, his son Tsar Simeon, Clement of Ohrid and Nahum whereas in Moravia where Constantine and Methodius worked in the main, it was extinguished and did not leave traces.¹⁷

The significance of Cyril and Methodius is great indeed. They created a weapon for the Slavs and showed them how to avoid assimilation by other nations and cultures. This was of great importance for the Bulgarians above all. Without the impetus of Constantine they might have been assimilated in the next centuries by the action of foreign political and religious influences in view of the peculiar course of events on the Balkan Peninsula. The Greeks in Egypt, in the Near East or along the Black Sea coast, the Lombards in Italy, the Burgundians, Franks and Normans in France are examples of such assimilatory processes.

Notes

¹Clement of Ohrid writes that Methodius was a servant of his younger brother Constantine (P. Dinekov, pp. 161 and 162).

²Constantine's father was a high-ranking Byzantine officer (drungarios). His name was Leo (cf. Ivan Snegarov, p. 71) or Stephan (cf. Fischer, Weltgeschichte, p. 144).

³The distinctive features of a Byzantine proper who could be an ethnic Armenian, Syrian or Slav were: well versed in Greek, recognition of the imperial institution and profession of the Orthodox faith (Fischer, *Weltgeschichte*).

⁴In his 'Altschechische Eigennamen und unsere Familien', Prag, 1964 Jan Svoboda ventures the supposition that the name Zarlo is a Czech adaptation of the name Cyril (cf. Ivan Pavlov). This is hardly convincing for: first, the name still exists in Bulgaria in two slight modifications and second, in Moravia the Slav apostle was known as Constantine only. E. Reusche makes the supposition that the revival of the Slav apostles' birth names by the Hussites some 600 years after the Moravian mission is to be explained by the search for tradition, for establishment, as is often the way with revolutionaries. Those names could have survived in oral tradition. (The authors were briefed by a letter of April 27, 1980). Besides, the Hussites might have had sources which subsequently perished.

⁵Taking a monastic name (a rare practice today in the new fraternities e.g. the Jesuits), is taking an oath by the new member of the order as second baptism (Brockhaus, Name).

"This is an interesting sentence. Why does the author compare the church of Constantinople, influential still through the patriarch, with the Bulgarian church in the time of Ottoman rule when it was condemned to insignificance? Why doesn't he make a comparison with the nearer Serbian church which, supported by the Grand

Vizier Rustem Pasha and by the Vizier Mehmed Sokologlu (both Slavs by birth) grew and became independent with the foundation of the bishopric of Ipek (Pec) in 1557? Why not with the great and mighty Russian church? Is it a reminiscence of the Moravian mission time?

⁷Clement wrote also panegyric and didactic orations of which 27 are extant. He translated the Flowery Triodium and composed a confessional contained in Euchologium Sinaiiticum. He died in 916 (Fischer, *Weltgeschichte*, S. 151).

We deliberately do not tackle the story by an anonymous 11th or 12th century writer, the so-called Salonica Legend. The writer of the story which is a short life of Constantine partly mixes the Slav apostle Cyril with Cyril of Cappadocia.

⁸Three imperial documents mention Constantine:

1. Of 855

The autumn, an embassy: George (Polassa), a 'secretary' (probably Photius) (and perhaps Constantine-Cyril) to the Arab caliph (Mutavakkil) with presents, to negotiate on exchanging prisoners of war.

2. Of 861

Mission of Constantine-Cyril as apostle of the faith to the Khazars on their request.

3. Of c. 863

To Rostislav of Moravia: an imperial letter about the missionary Constantine (Cyril) sent to him. By the grace of God the Emperor sends Rostislav the most wise man who knew Moravian too. The Moravians should not delay their conversion to the Orthodox faith and take the true road (Dölger, S. 54, 55, 56).

⁹Glagolitic. One of the two forms of Church Slavonic script as a Bulgarian 'round' Glagolitic superseded in the

10th century by the simplified Cyrillic in the Orthodox region; as Croatian 'angular' Glagolitic it survived in the Croatian insular and littoral region of North Adria till later times. According to V. Jagic's concept which is generally accepted the Glagolitic is based on the Greek minuscule letters that were adjusted with an original sense of form and on borrowings from Oriental alphabets.

Roman ritual divine service still uses the 'angular' Glagolitic (Brockhaus, Glagoliza).

Emil Georgiev adduces convincing arguments that the Slavs had an alphabet prior to Constantine but with local usage.

¹⁰'Bulgarian' and 'Slav' stand for the language spoken in Bulgaria in that time. It is known that Bulgaria was founded in 680 (Byzantium recognised it in 681) by Khan Asparouh, by one Proto-Bulgarian tribe and seven Slav tribes. The alliance must have been on peaceful consent by equal partners for none of the historical sources mention armed conflicts nor do they suggest any other conclusions.

The partnership must have been a long one because as early as 559 Slavs and Kutriguri (a Proto-Bulgarian tribal branch) jointly attacked Thessalonica and Constantinople. (Fischer, Weltgeschichte, S. 140).

From the very beginning the life together of the Slav majority and Proto-Bulgarian minority must have led to a sure and inevitably growing Slavicisation of the Proto-Bulgarians. The popular council of 893 in Preslav is a most telling proof of the conclusion of the process. Among other things it took a decision to use Old Bulgarian as the official language in the stead of Greek that had been used till then.

No mention is made of using Proto-Bulgarian.

The two different ethnic groups' communal life was not to be found on the Balkan Peninsula only. Guzzo (pp. 120–121) writes that the band which Alzec, Asparouh's brother led to Southern Italy in 667 and settled in Sapri consisted of Proto-Bulgarians and Slavs (Slavi Donchev's point).

¹¹It was in Byzantium (therefore prior to the Moravian mission) that Constantine translated the Gospel According to St. John, the lectionary, the vespers, matins and liturgy in Old Bulgarian.

¹²Manasses' Chronicle contains another 18 interpolations pertaining to Bulgarian history between the 6th and 11th centuries.

¹³Today it is a prevailing opinion that the Bulgarians were converted to Christianity in 864–865. The supposition is wrong and based exclusively on two sources: the one was an inscription on stone found during World War I near the village of Balshi, South Albania, reading that Prince Boris converted his nation in 6374 after the creation of the world. The other is marginalia on the translation of the Orations of Athanasius of Alexandria extant in a transcript of 907 by Tudor Doksov according to which the conversion of the Bulgarians was in the 'Year of the Dog', in the fifth month. The notion 'Year of the Dog' in the fifth month was borrowed from the Proto-Bulgarian lunar and solar calendar.

Those written records are not official and this makes it difficult to translate the year into our chronology. The year 6374 should stand for the period from September 1, 865 to August 31, 866; 'the Year of the Dog, fifth month', May or June 866 (according to Yordan Ivanov).

This dating badly corresponds with other exactly argumented datings of historic events related to the Bulgarians' conversion.

An official document of the Byzantine Emperor Michael III of 863 published by Dölger in 'Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches', part three, p. 56, under catalogue number 461 reads: 'In 863 peace with the Prince of the Bulgarians Boris. Boris gets the region between the Iron Gate (Demir-Kapu) and Develtus (near modern Bourgas) called by the Bulgarians Zagora. Boris adopts Christianity – sending one bishop and several priests as missionaries.'

¹⁴The Bulgarians' passing to the Roman church had been planned and executed by Boris. In 866 he asked his ally Ludwig the German to send him a bishop and Western clergymen. Again in 866 he asked Pope Nicholas I (858–867), the enemy of Patriarch Photius, to explain the pure (*sine macula et ruga*) faith and send him able teachers of the faith. Nicholas I sent him the bishops Formosus (who later became a pope, 891–896) and Paul. Boris I expelled then the Byzantine clergy from the country. German clergy led by Bishop Ermenrich of Passau arrived later. Within four years the new Pope Hadrian II (867–872) sent him the bishops Grimoald, Marinus, Silvester, Liudprand and Dominic. Bulgaria's association with the Roman church was thwarted by the fact that Boris wanted for a Bulgarian bishop no one else but Formosus or Marinus whereas the Pope was prepared to appoint anyone but none of those two (Ivan Snegarov, p. 25).

¹⁵Prince Boris (852–889) worked for his state in daylight and for his church at night. Seven cathedrals are ascribed to him (perhaps in Pliska, Belgrade, Ohrid, Devol, Prespa, Bregalnitsa), according to Ivan Snegarov, p. 71. In 889 Boris, on his own will renounced the throne and entered a monastery. Later he ordered that his elder son and successor Vladimir be blinded for

he tried to overthrow Christianity.

¹⁶According to Ivan Snegarov (p. 7), the logothete Theoctistus took Constantine to Constantinople when he was 14.

¹⁷Here and there Old Bulgarian survived as a privilege as in the Sazava Monastery or under Charles IV in the Emmaus Monastery in Prague.





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Contents

Ineradicable Roots. Konstantin Mechev	
	257
Foreword	
	260
The Question of the Slav Apostles'	
Nationality.	
Known Facts and Their Order	
	261
Constantine's Slavonic Alphabet	
- the Glagolitic	
	277
Which Alphabet	
Should Constantine Have Chosen?	
	280
For Whom Could Constantine	
Create His Alphabet?	
	280
Dating the Alphabet	
	282
Reasons for the Creation of the Alphabet	
	287

Consequences of the New Alphabet	
	290
Why Wasn't the Glagolitic Alphabet Invented and Used Earlier?	
	291
Why in Moravia First?	
	292
The Moravian Mission – Reasons and Intentions	
	293
Translation of the Moravian Mission to Bulgaria	
	295
Constantine's Nationality	
	297
Possible Reasons for Constantine's Family's Flight	
	300
Attempt at Dating	
	302
A Hypothesis for Constantine's Participation in the Bulgarian's Conversion	
	303
Conclusions	
	316
The Significance of Constantine and Methodius' Lifework	
	317
Notes	
	318
Bibliography	
	325

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